

EXHIBIT 5
DATE 2/19/09
HB 583

1721 Phillips Street
Missoula, MT 59802
February 19, 2009

Rep. Jon Sesso, Chairman, House Appropriations Committee,
and Members of the House Appropriations Committee
1301 East Sixth Avenue
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

I am writing to urge your support of HB 583 on behalf of Grow Montana's Farm to Cafeteria Connections, which is a statewide network that provides resources for institutions that purchase Montana foods.

Montana's public institutions spend approximately \$33 million on food annually, which is a significant market that local farmers and ranchers are increasingly taking advantage of. In my experience developing the University of Montana Western's Farm to College program, I quickly realized the need for more local processing as we often felt "topped out" in the availability of Montana foods that we could purchase. Now more than ever, we hear people across the state echoing similar sentiments, which not only speaks to the need for more processing, but also to a general increase in demand for local foods by Montana's institutions.

Last year the University of Montana Missoula spent over \$700,000 on local foods, and the Missoula County Public Schools spent approximately \$160,000 through their Farm to School program. There are numerous smaller schools across the state which are purchasing locally, as are some hospitals, but the growth of these programs is inhibited by a lack of locally processed foods. Please support HB 583, which funds six existing Food and Agricultural Centers, and can help fill a gap in Montana's Farm to Cafeteria movement.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

Sincerely,



Kevin Moore
Grow Montana's Farm to Cafeteria Connections
<www.growmontana.ncat.org/farm_cafe/>

MISSION MOUNTAIN

FOOD ENTERPRISE CENTER

If you can't visit Montana - At least you can taste it!

AUTUMN 2008 NEWS

Look for this Buy Fresh—Buy Local label to assure you are buying delicious, locally grown products.



Our featured business: Western Montana Growers Coop

Area residents have been receiving fresh vegetables from the Western Montana Growers Cooperative delivered to the MMFEC each week of the growing season as farmers come together to build a better local food system! Be sure to sign up for next season at: www.wmgcoop.com



University of Montana rolls out a new Farm to College logo

MMFEC is proudly supporting and promoting the innovative Farm-to-College Program - serving Montana local food to Montana students in 5 state schools! Thanks to the vision of University of Montana's Dining Services Director, Mark LoParco, Montana's agricultural interests and specialty food entrepreneurs can provide Montana food to local schools and universities. Producers who are interested in this program can contact Sue Toppen at MMFEC.

Matthew Silent Thunder's New Buffalo Jerky Impresses Montana's Governor Schweitzer

May 2008—Lake County Entrepreneur Matthew Silent Thunder got a chance to visit with Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer and show him the 100% Natural Buffalo Jerky product that he is producing at MMFEC. Using our USDA inspected meat room allows Matthew to market his 100% Natural Buffalo Jerky to stores throughout the nation and international markets as well. Matthew has used the business development services of LCCDC and C2 Business Solutions, a business consulting firm, to create his business plan and prepare his company for a successful start-up. Matthew is proud to offer his traditionally smoked and processed jerky, following his native traditions. Look for Matthew's Buffalo Jerky soon at a store near you this coming winter.



Governor Schweitzer (right) meets with Mathew Silent Thunder (left), Jay Preston (LCCDC Board President), Roland Godan (Facility Manager)

Manufacturers Cooperative Meeting Scheduled In Tandem With Better Process Control School

Montana's value-added food producers are invited to gather at 5 PM September 25th, 2008 at the **Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center** in Ronan to establish a Montana Specialty Food Manufacturing Cooperative. Jan Tusick, Cooperative Program Manager, for Lake County Community Development will discuss the collaborative possibilities that a cooperative group can expect from combined purchasing of ingredients and glassware or shipping cost savings that can be realized when members order bottles and containers to be delivered together. Collaborative marketing and trade show attendance will also be on the agenda. In conjunction with the co-op meeting, The Food Enterprise Center is sponsoring the Better Process Control School. This is the only offering of this WSU class in Montana this year. Don't miss it if you are an processor of acidified shelf stable bottled products.

Call 406-676-0676 to register.

Attention Montana Food Producers! Montana Better Process Control School

Offered by Dr. Richard Dougherty
Bi-State School of Food Science WSU

Thursday September 25th, 2008 8-4 pm
Friday September 26th, 2008 8-2 pm

Call 406-676-0676 to reserve your spot in this important class!

Cost for participation:\$400

Send Name, Address, Phone# and
Check to:

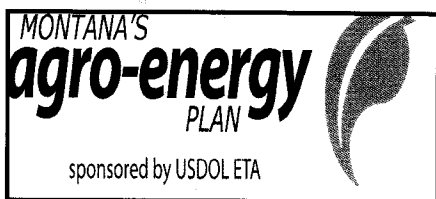
Better Process Control School
Food Enterprise Center

405 Main St. SW Ronan, MT 59864

Each processor of low-acid or acidified foods must operate under the direction of a certified supervisor on hand at all times during processing.

Bio-Product Innovation Center Program Offers Food Entrepreneur Training

Lake County Community Development Corp. in partnership with the Montana Bio-Product Innovation Center Network, will coordinate a workshop, **Concept to Consumer— Starting a Food Venture**, to be held in Billings, Great Falls and Havre in 2008. This technical assistance is a must for any Montanan with a great food idea. Ready to help develop your family's favorite recipe into a commercial product? Don't miss the class near you! Workshop topics will include: Processing food safety, navigating regulatory submissions, marketing your food product and more. Join us to develop your food concept into a packaged food product, ready to sell to the market (locally and/or nationally and beyond)! Call Sue Toppen or Jan Tusick at the Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center for the schedule and location near you. (406-676-0676 or 888-353-5900). Montana's Bio-Product Innovation Center Network serves bio-energy, value added agriculture and food entrepreneurs in 32 Counties in Eastern Montana. Contact Tracey Jette, BPIC Network Coordinator, at 406-262-5923 or visit <http://agr.mt.gov/business/bio-centers.asp> for more information.



Tipu's Chai Tea Wins at Vegas Tea Expo

Congratulations to clients Bipin Patel and Naga Nataka of **Tipu's Tiger Chai Tea** – an anchor client of MMFEC. Winners of **Best Tea Freestyle** at **The International Tea Expo** in Las Vegas June 2008. Bipin's delicious "Chaitini" drink, made with Tipu's Chai Tea Concentrate, vanilla ice cream and Myers Rum, proved to be the judges' favorite at the annual gathering of tea sellers and tea lovers from around the world. Tipu's Tiger Chai, based in Missoula, MT also received First Prize for **Best Sweetened Black Tea** for their Iced Chai. Attendance at the event connected Patel with several national distributors for his Chai Tea Concentrate. The company is in full swing to supply brokers from Tennessee to Seattle with the Chai samples that they will distribute to clients nationwide. For more information on Tipu's Tiger Chai, call Bipin at 406-240-9979.



Food Enterprise Center Staff:

Roland Godan, Facilities Manager
Sue Toppen, Client Services Mgr.
Jan Tusick, Program Mgr.
Yvette Rodriguez, Lead Processor
Ramonda Addington, Admin. Asst.

Contact us at:

406-676-0676/1-888-353-5900
mtmountainmarket.org
405 Main Street
Ronan, MT 59864

*Lake County Community Development
is an equal opportunity provider*

Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center (MMFEC) is Montana's only food products business incubator with an automated bottling line, USDA inspected meat room, shared-use community kitchen, and freezer/refrigerated warehousing space. The facility also maintains a certified organic handlers license. Residents of Montana are invited to manufacture their food products with the technical assistance of the staff. A program of Lake County Community Development Corp., a 501c3 non-profit organization, MMFEC has been funded with help from the Montana Depts. of Agriculture and Commerce, US Dept. of Health and Human Services, US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, US Dept. of Commerce, Economic Development Administration and USDA Rural Development. We would like to thank our sponsors and contributors and a special thank you to **Continental Mills** of Seattle for their contribution to MMFEC. These generous sponsors help provide services to Montana Food Entrepreneurs!

**MISSION
MOUNTAIN**
FOOD ENTERPRISE CENTER

PO BOX 722
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